

# AIS

## Aquatic Invasive Species

### FLOWERING RUSH

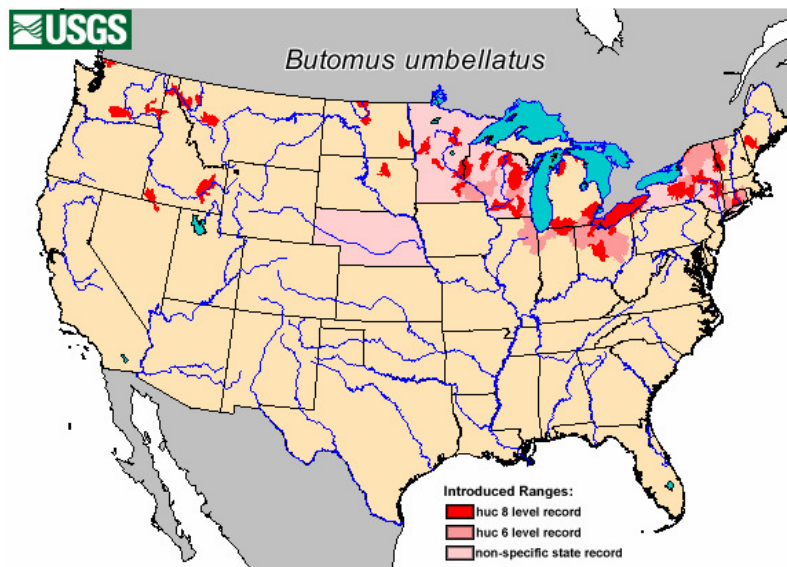
**COMMON NAME:** Flowering Rush

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Butomus umbellatus*

The genus *Butomus* consists of only one species.



<http://caliban.mpiz-koeln.mpg.de/~stueber/lindman/>  
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#### **DISTRIBUTION:**

Flowering rush is native to Eurasia. This plant has been reported in the majority of the states in the northern half of the continental United States. Flowering rush is widespread in the Great Lakes region.

**INDIANA:** Flowering rush has only been found in Elkhart County.

**DESCRIPTION:** It is easiest to identify this perennial aquatic plant when it is in flower. Each flower has three pink to white petals that are approximately one inch across. Flowers grow in “umbrella shaped” clusters. The pistils of this flower ripen into a dark brown fruit that is about 1 cm in length and when spilt open at maturity is filled with tiny seeds. Flowering rush has green stems that are triangular in cross section. With erect leaves that may have spirally twisted tips, this plant can emerge up to five feet above the water level. The root system of this aquatic plant is a thick creeping rhizome. Bulbils form on the rhizome that can easily break off when disturbed and form a new plant. The plant grows mainly in marshes and shallow water but can also grow in water several feet deep. Usually only plants growing in shallow water will flower.

**LIFE CYCLE BIOLOGY:** Reproduction of this species can be through rhizomal/rootstalk spread or by seed.

**PATHWAYS/HISTORY:** First described by Linnaeus in 1753, this Eurasian native was found in North America in 1897 along the St. Lawrence River in Quebec. In the United States, it was first found in Michigan in 1918.

**DISPERSAL/SPREAD:** Both seed and rootstock pieces (bulblets) can be spread by water current. Wildlife, such as muskrats, can carry the plant to new locales. Anglers and boaters can transport flowering rush on their equipment and natural water and ice movements can carry this aquatic plant to new areas as well. This plant is available through the water garden industry for planting and has likely increased the rate of spread of flowering rush.

**RISKS/IMPACTS:** Like most invasive species, flowering rush competes with native plants for limited resources. It can be an obstacle for boaters where this plant is present. The hardiness of this species makes it very capable of being highly invasive in the United States.

**MANAGEMENT/PREVENTION:** Chemical application can be employed, but is rarely effective because herbicides wash away and there is no species-specific herbicide for this plant. Cutting flowering rush below the water surface will not kill the plant; however it will slow its spread. Since this plant grows back from its root, many cuttings may be necessary and all plant parts need to be removed from the water.

A few states regulate flowering rush due to its invasiveness. This plant is listed as banned in Connecticut and Minnesota. Vermont lists it as a class B noxious weed. If the plant is found in a body of water in Washington, the water is subject to be quarantined.

Flowering rush has been used for water garden plantings due to its attractive flower. Use of this plant is discouraged as it has been shown to invade shallow waters of lakes and wetlands, thus displacing native species.

There are some simple things you can do to prevent the spread of flowering rush and other aquatic invasive plants:

- ✓ Use native plants in ornamental ponds.
- ✓ Dispose of unwanted aquarium and ornamental pond plants in the trash. DO NOT discard plants in other water bodies!
- ✓ Rinse any mud and/or debris from equipment and wading gear and drain any water from boats before leaving the launch area.
- ✓ Remove all plant fragments from your boat, trailer, and propeller prior to leaving the launch site. The transportation of plant fragments is the main introduction route to new lakes and rivers.
- ✓ Report the sighting of flowering rush to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife.
  - (317) 234-3883
  - [dkeller@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:dkeller@dnr.IN.gov)
  - 402 W. Washington St., Rm W273  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

**References:**

Ling Cao. 11 August 2008. *Butomus umbellatus*. USGS Nonindigenous Aquatic Species Database, Gainesville, FL.

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